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Redevelopment Board Minutes 12/16/2013

Arlington Redevelopment Board

December 16, 2013

Selectmen's Hearing Room, Town Hall – 7:00 p.m.

Approved: 1-13-14

PRESENT: Mike Cayer, Chair, Bruce Fitzsimmons, Christine Scypinski, Andy West

ABSENT: Andrew Bunnell,

STAFF: Carol Kowalski, Laura Wiener, Joey Glushko, Ted Fields

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00pm and welcomed the Master Plan Advisory Committee, jointly convened for the purpose of having ARB member Andy West present the planning opportunities and benefits of a Mill Brook District. The Open Space Committee was also in attendance. After Mr. West presented the slides and described the attributes, assets and benefits of an area centered on the Mill Brook and bounded by Massachusetts Avenue and the Minuteman Bikeway, the Board and the Master Plan Advisory Committee discussed the means and needs to achieve the potential of a Mill Brook District. Master Plan Advisory Committee Chair Charles Kalaskas stressed that urban design principles are needed in the Mill Brook District. It was suggested that Summer Street and Lowell Street be included in a possible district because they are important connectors to the bikepath and the Mill Brook.

Master Plan Advisory Committee member Harris Band commented that the way to present the concept will depend on how well we communicate what is special about this area. He added that the word "district" does not resonate, but Mr. West's use of the phrase "DNA", three strands of Mass Ave, the former rail line, and the brook, creates a vivid image of what's unique here, and are clearly more connected than a "district". To get people excited, we have to provide the reasons, which are right there, and promote the vision of an Arlington heritage corridor. Master Plan Advisory Committee member Ann LeRoy commented that the word, "Brook" should be part of the district title and also that the word "district" may not be appropriate. She suggested either "Mill Brook District," or "Mill Brook Corridor."

Mr. West and Mr. Fitzsimmons added that similar to the High Line in New York City, the Mill Brook District was always there all the time, but was undiscovered. Open Space Committee member Brian Barber urged that this concept be included in the Master Plan. He added that a positive appeal was that the Mill Brook/Mass Ave/bikepath concept described is a local asset, as compared with the bikepath alone, which is a regional facility. He recommended that the Master Plan Advisory Committee and the Redevelopment Board look at how Town Brook in Plymouth was designed and developed as a multi-purpose community asset.

[Open Space Member Leslie Mayer] mentioned the 1976 Mia Lehrer study urging that future Arlington development be guided to turn towards the Mill Brook and face it as an opportunity, rather than back up to the brook, and turn from it.

Mr. Band added that the area between Mass Ave and the old rail line captures the traces of the old Arlington setting that hasn't become precious, but could invite people to look and see what the Town was historically about.

The Board then turned to the next agenda item, Arlington 360 conditions to be met prior to the issuance of final certificate of occupancy. Mr. Cayer explained that Foley Hoag had prepared the matrix, and staff would determine when each remaining item has been done, and would check it off for the Board. Members would provide any comments on the matrices to Ms. Kowalski. Mr. Cayer added that the Board would go over the matrix at the January 6 or 13 meeting, as well as warrant articles for medical marijuana zoning and signage, as required.

Ms. Scypinski reported on the siting of the bus stop at Arlington 360, and the fact that the paved bus stop was within the conservation restriction boundary. The Transportation Advisory Committee would be invited to the Board's February 3 meeting.

Mr. Fitzsimmons then moved to approve the minutes of the December 6 meeting. Mr. West seconded and all voted in favor.

Mr. Fitzsimmons then moved that the Chair shall have the authority to review proposed signage changes for Citizens Bank and permit the Director to approve the sign change at her discretion. Mr. West seconded and all voted in favor.

Ms. Scypinski then moved to adjourn at 9:30pm, the motion was duly seconded and all voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Kowalski, Secretary ex Officio